

Benefit-Trading: A Practical Guide for Construction (CIRIA Publication)

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Construction Innovation: The Implementation of Lean Construction towards Sustainable Innovation

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Abstract

The prevalent theory of construction has been seen as a hindrance to construction innovation. The concept of lean construction is concerned with the application of lean thinking to the construction industry. However, in lean construction there are many arguments supporting the view that 'the prevalent theory of production (or specifically, theory of construction) is counterproductive, and leads to added costs and reduced overall performance through the deficient production control principles based on the theory'. Presently, the construction industry and all other organisations face various problems as a result of the uncertainties of the global economic climate; including labour redundancies, delayed projects and zero margin contract bids. The construction industry is seen as one of the worst performing industry as regards innovation. This calls for concern about the poor state of construction innovation. The emergence of lean construction is to bring significant reform to the construction industry to achieve the objectives of sustainability within the built environment in the critical social, economic and environmental aspects. Increasingly, lean construction offers new techniques of constructing sustainable projects. It is about reducing costs by cutting waste, innovating by engaging people and organising the work-place to be more efficient. Hence, the aim of this paper is to highlight the cost and benefits of the potential contribution of lean construction to the attainment of sustainable innovation in construction. An exploratory method of investigation is adopted in achieving the aim of this paper by critically reviewing, exploring, and synthesising literature and industry case studies related to the subject matter. Evidence from the literature reveals that innovation through lean improvement in construction processes has provided proof of sustainability outcomes in terms of reduced waste, effort and time. Hence, lean

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